

Young talent time

Teens are the next superstars as auditions uncover Brisbane's hidden talent. Story by **Chris Herden**

Move over Justin Bieber. At 17 he's already a veteran of showbiz and more than 12 million people worldwide follow his every move on Twitter. But Brisbane's got talent and there are plenty of new stars emerging, chasing a dream for success. Perhaps inspired by Queensland's own Cody Simpson who, at 14, is making a name for himself in music after launching himself on YouTube, or by twins Isabella and Sofia who won the hearts of millions of television viewers as they showed themselves to be supercooks on the first series of *Junior MasterChef*, kids across the city are stepping out of the shadows and into the spotlight for a chance at stardom.

This weekend will see a whole new cast of kids take the heat in the kitchen as the next series of *Junior MasterChef* starts on Channel Ten on Sunday night (25 September, 7.30pm). Among them will be 12-year-olds

Jack from Ashgrove, Li from Inala and Indigo from Wynnum, alongside 11-year-old Quoi from The Gap. On the same weekend, on both Saturday and Sunday, hundreds of kids are expected to line up at the Brisbane Entertainment Centre to take part in auditions for the new *Young Talent Time*, a reinvention of the junior variety show (also for the Ten Network) which first found success in the 1970s and launched the careers of some of Australia's biggest international stars, including Danni Minogue and Tina Arena.

Singer, record producer and *YTT* creator Johnny Young will once again be behind the show and one-time *Australian Idol* finalist Rob Mills will be the presenter. It's been eight years since Mills was on *Idol* and he says TV talent shows have inspired droves of talented children and teens to sign up for performance schools, acting classes, dancing and singing lessons.

As a result there's a lot of untapped talent out there – 10,000 children around the country have already registered for *YTT* auditions.

"There are a lot more kids out there who are wanting to perform now so I think it's the perfect time to bring back *Young Talent Time*," Mills says. "I know that any audition can be quite nerve-wracking but I think kids these days have so much more confidence."

One of those kids is **Georgie Rowlands**, from Morayfield, who appears on the cover of this issue of *bmag*. At 13 Georgie is already a seasoned performer and currently playing the title role in the Fame Theatre Company's school holiday show *Cinderella*. Just last



Georgie Rowlands

month she made her professional debut in *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* for the Queensland Theatre Company but she has been performing since she could walk and talk. According to mum Julie, her daughter loved to sing and dance around the house so much – a natural talent she claims Georgie has not inherited from either of her parents – that five years ago she enrolled Georgie with Fame.

"I just love being on stage, it is so much fun. I do jazz, tap, ballet and singing lessons at



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my school and I do drama outside of school as well, and I'm hoping to go into a performing arts school like WAAPA (Western Australia Performing Arts Academy) when I finish high school." Meanwhile, Georgie has been working on a song and a dance routine she has choreographed herself for her *Young Talent Time* audition.

Courtney Cavallaro, 11, hasn't quite made up her mind about whether *YTT* is for her since it was a show from a bygone era by the time she was even born. "I don't exactly know what *Young Talent Time* is but I love musicals and it's definitely a thing I'd be interested in," says the Wilston primary school student who has starred in *Alice in Wonderland* and is playing Peter Pan in *Peter and Wendy* at Brisbane Arts Theatre until 1 October.

"My dream has always been to be on film but I like theatre because you can just get

straight into it. I love comedy but if there is a chance to do something tense and dramatic, I'd love that too.

"I was always a loud and confident kid and I started doing school acting clubs just for a bit of fun," Courtney says. "Mum and dad thought it would be good for me and I took things a bit further with Harvest Rain Theatre Company. I love the performers there and I love Adam Sandler and I would like to be like that."

According to Harvest Rain's training manager, Su Wilkinson, Courtney is a very natural young actress who doesn't have to try too hard. "She has fantastic stage presence,



Sarah McCreanor

is very dedicated to her acting craft and we think she is really going to go somewhere, particularly on the acting side of things."

At 19 **Sarah McCreanor**, from Shailer Park, is already too old for *Young Talent Time*, which is auditioning children from age 8 to 16, but she will get her time in the spotlight when she stars in the arena spectacular version of the animated action fantasy film *How to Train Your Dragon*, which will begin its world tour in Australia in March 2012. "It's a pretty overwhelming experience I'm about to go on. It is going to be very active, acrobatic and physically demanding," she says.

Sarah is trained in many dance forms,

circus and trapeze work and has performed with Tim Minchin and Kanye West. She is studying visual arts and has created her own shows for *Australia's Got Talent* and for the *2-High Festival* at Brisbane's Powerhouse.

"Versatility is something I've always admired. Frank Woodley is my idol because he combines comedy, acting, acrobatics and he is a musician and artist and I thought...oh, I want to do that. It's been such a rewarding experience to do my own work at a young age and, even though there are mistakes along the way, it gives me the motivation to keep going and create more."

Young Talent Time auditions will be held 24 and 25 September from 9am at the Brisbane Entertainment Centre. For details see www.ten.com.au/ytt. Australia's Got Talent auditions will be on 19 and 20 November at the Brisbane Convention and Exhibition Centre from 9.30am. For details see www.fmashows.com/agt.

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